

**The God-Centered Representative**  
**Must Love Man as Represented in the Law**  
**Matthew 5:17-48**

**II. The representative of God must be perfectly holy for God is perfectly holy as revealed in the Law and the Prophets (5:17--7:12).**

*This major section is bordered by the statement "the Law and (or) the Prophets" in 5:17 and 7:12. In between these bookends, Jesus will outline who God is (holy, merciful) and who man is (evil, depraved). This is the summation of the Law and the Prophets.*

**A. God is represented by the Law as explained and lived by Jesus and not by the self-centered (human righteousness) interpretations of the Pharisees, which will not qualify for kingdom entrance since they do not represent God's righteousness (5:17-20)**

5:17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill<sup>1</sup>.

18 "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.<sup>2</sup>

19 "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these<sup>3</sup> commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least<sup>4</sup> in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

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<sup>1</sup> The "fulfill" here indicates a completion of the requirements of the Law in the Messiah as the Old Testament anticipated.

<sup>2</sup> This word "come to be" or "come to pass" is utilized in 24:34 in exactly the same form. It must be noted that in 24:34 the "come to pass" is likely interpreted to mean 'see the fulfillment in the Messiah' (First Advent) and would reflect the meaning more if translated "come to be" (as in "born").

Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.

ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γένεα αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται.

<sup>3</sup> There is some question as to whether "these" commandments refers to the Law or to Jesus' commandments (i.e., the Sermon's explanation of the Law). While there is some basis for Jesus' commandments as being the fullness of the dispensational transition of the Law as now seen in Him (e.g., Matthew 24:13:20) and the Sermon itself will show the validity of His Words as being of the authority of God Himself (Matthew 7:29), and that His Words will be the foundation for the judgment (7:24-27), the point of the Sermon is that the Law was the righteous standard of God. Jesus words should not be seen as different from the Law, only that the righteousness of the Law would now be found in Him. And at this point of the sermon it appears best to assume "these" commandments refers to the former verse where "least of these commandments" refers to the 'jot' or 'tittle' of the Law.

Note also that the word for "commandments" (noun; ἐντολή) or for "command" (verb; ἐντέλλομαι) is only used once in the book in relationship to Jesus' commanding. That is in Matthew 28:20; the last verse of the book, "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." All the rest of the uses are referring to the Old Testament Law.

<sup>4</sup> The question of the figure of speech "least . . . greatest . . . in the kingdom" is answered in the next verse. The scribes and the Pharisees would annul the smallest of commandments and would be

20 "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness<sup>5</sup> surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

*Note here the emphasis is not on hearing them but on 'keeping' and 'teaching' them. This corresponds to the commandment at the end of the book in 28:20, "...teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." The 'keeping' regards a personal involvement with the content of the commandments (i.e., belief in King).<sup>6</sup> The 'teaching' involves another level of involvement, that of disciples who are to proclaim these commandments.<sup>7</sup> The opposite of this progression is 'unbelief' and false teaching'.*

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smallest in the kingdom. The figure is simply a statement of the greatest to the least (the whole spectrum of possibilities), and the 'least' is actually not entering the kingdom. Bullinger holds this meaning as the use of a figure called "cohabitation" (Bullinger, p.294, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968, "Matt. V. 19 . . . In the former place, the allusion is to the distinction which the Pharisees made between different commandments . . . There is no such distinction, and therefore, when in the latter place Christ says "he shall be called the least," He means that he will not be there at all, for there will be no such distinction there. There is no least in either case."). Also refer to Matthew 18:1-4. In a response to the statement of "who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven," Jesus responds that unless they are humbled like a child, and repent, they shall not enter." Then He states that this child (the humbled person) is the greatest. Therefore it may be seen that either one becomes humbled before God and becomes "great in the kingdom of heaven" or he is not in the Kingdom of heaven at all.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness is the righteousness of God here, or God's actions and desires. That a 'partial' keeping of them was characteristic of what the Pharisees advocated is evident from the rich young man's testimony in response to Jesus' exhortation to 'keep the commandments'. He said, "Which ones?" (Matthew 19:18)

<sup>6</sup> In order for one to "keep" the commandments he was to *completely* 'keep' them. He could not simply keep 99% of them and miss 1% of them. Since the commandments are a reflection of the character of God, anything short of them is misrepresentation. That is why the sacrifices were included in the Law, so that man could receive forgiveness and be declared righteous through the symbols. James reflects this as he speaks to *believers*,

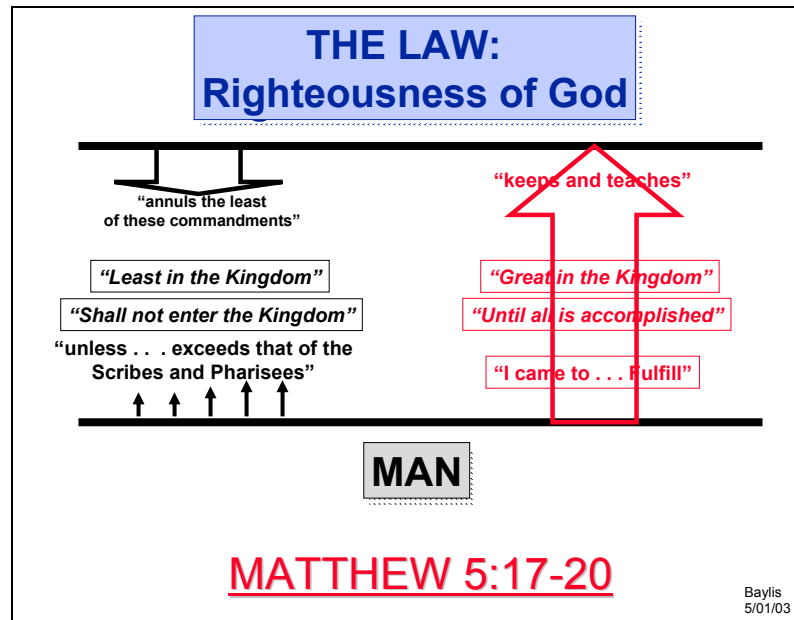
James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole <sup>1</sup>law and yet <sup>a</sup>stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all.

ὅστις γὰρ ὅλον τὸν νόμον τηρήσῃ πταίσις δὲ ἐν ἐνί, γέγονεν πάντων ἔνοχος.

Thus one was to obey the Law from one's heart and place himself on the mercy of God, and thus be declared righteous which is the essence of belief.

It should be noted that while there is value in examining commandments separately, as a guide for one's life in individual areas (e.g., "Thou shalt not commit adultery" as the heart of God to be reflected by His representative to his brother in a positive, self-sacrificing love for his brother's wife), to follow that as a principle did not indicate the 'keeping' of it (since one never had the proper character attitude as God does), and thus it did not grant righteousness, but declared the character as evil. Thus, one must always recognize that the indication of one's character was always evil under the Law, no matter how many or how far one could go in keeping *some* of the commandments. Partial keeping (not having the character of God) did not grant anyone blessing or any positive benefit, but only the granting of mercy from God to the humble (needy) believer. 'Partial keeping' (selective) of the Law was what the Pharisees advocated. An illustration of this is the rich young man, who replied to Jesus statement of ". . . keep the commandments" in Matthew 19:18; "Which ones?"

<sup>7</sup> However note that this is testimony and will come *always* from one's heart. In other words all have a confidence of the heart regarding their relationship with God which will be told in their confession. However, here it is exhorted since it is means by which the word is spread to others.



Note the contrasting claims here or the message is missed. In verses 17-18, Jesus points out something about Himself. First of all, the Law is not to be altered to fit man (or Jesus). Secondly, Jesus fits (fulfills) the Law perfectly without its alteration.

The contrast is thus proposed. Either one fulfills the Law and enters the Kingdom or one does not and thus does not enter. Jesus states that He fulfills the Law (not altering it) and that the Pharisees do not fulfill the Law (they change it to fit themselves).

Thus the point is that there is only one holy standard, and that is the unchanged Law, and Jesus is the only One who keeps it. He, thus, is the only One who has the right to enter the Kingdom.

Jesus' point here is that there are two possibilities.

- Either one keeps and teaches
- Or he annuls and teaches.

The Pharisees and scribes (5:20) are characteristic of the latter group and fail to enter the kingdom (not true sons of the kingdom). The other group unmistakably enters the kingdom. However, it will be shown in the next chapter (and has been in 5:10-11) that Jesus is the only One keeping it (100%), that man does not keep it(100%). Man's heart is different than God's.

Ultimately in the sermon, the believer will only "keep them" by seeing the fullness of the Law in Jesus and receive Him as the King (i.e., believe in Him for imputation of righteousness to oneself).

Teaching this 100% righteous standard is to be one's testimony. The Pharisees did not recognize Him, and focused on their own righteousness (not their depravity) and thus annulled the commandments of the Law and taught others. Their (own) righteousness did not have value for the kingdom.

*There is great discussion over these verses and most commentators advocate that Jesus is advocating a personal righteousness here achieved through obedience (i.e., good works) in one's sanctificational life. However, a simple reading of these four verses would see clearly that a personal, less than 100% (of which we all qualify), righteousness is not advocated, for even 99% righteousness (a great and unattainable accomplishment for all of us) is clearly condemned, being pronounced as "least" (the smallest of credibility). Therefore the thrust of these four verses is that only the 100% the advocated, anything less is condemned. Therefore practical application toward the performance of righteousness is condemned.*

*It should also be noted that imputation does not seem to be hinted at here. Identification with the righteousness of Christ has been referenced in 5:10-11, but these verses taken by themselves leave the reader in a category that he does not desire based on his/her personal righteousness. Of course, this problem is only the beginning of the Sermon, to be solved later.*

**B. The Righteousness of God: God is not represented in the self-glorifying<sup>8</sup> interpretations of the Pharisees ("You have heard..."), but in the fullness of the Law, here explained by Jesus ("but [ὅτι]<sup>9</sup> I say..."), for it is these that God's love of brother is expressed in His representative (5:21-48).**

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<sup>8</sup> Note here that the problem with the Pharisees was *not* the following:

- a. Rule-keeping (inaccurately referred to as *legalism*). There is nothing wrong with keeping rules, as long as the rules reflect accurately a value and activity of the heart toward God. For instance, the Pharisees were religiously praying, fasting and giving alms. All these are prescribed by the Law, yet the rules were now imposed in order to glorify themselves instead of God. This is why they did it publicly. The point then is not to glorify God (vertical) nor help the poor (alms, horizontal), but to elevate oneself in the eyes of others. Note that Ephesians 4--6 is full of rules. Refer to Isaiah 58 where these items of Matt. 6 are generally dealt with to point out that the purpose is to show mercy to others not to glorify oneself through their keeping.
- b. Keeping the *letter* and not the *spirit* of the Law (Refer to NIV Study Bible notes on Matt. 5:18-20; p. 1449, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1985, "It was following the letter of the Law while ignoring its spirit . . ."). If the *letter* of the Law is what is contained in the words, then what is the *spirit* and how is it communicated? If Jesus is speaking of some unwritten, but to be understood, portion of the Law, then why in verse 18 does He speak of the "smallest letter or stroke", the written parts of the Law? This would imply that God had not communicated His intent in the words of the Law, that there was some *extra-sensory* meaning not imparted in words. This is *never* the case. God expects men to understand the explicit meaning of the Law, and what He expected was written in the Law ("Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul"). The problem was that the Pharisees only chose what they felt was self-glorifying and accomplishable and neglected the main point of the Law, which was to demonstrate God's heart. For instance, the Pharisees were not lovers of the widow, orphan, and alien, which was a clear command of the Law.

The difference between the Pharisees interpretation and Jesus was indeed a difference between the simple, limited, visible, external result of the evil character (e.g., "You have heard it said . . . thou shalt not commit adultery") and the inclusion of the heart motivation of those Laws (e.g., "but (or 'now') I say unto you . . . has already committed adultery with her in your heart"). However, that heart motivation **was** part of the Law and was not added by Jesus (e.g., "These commands which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart.", "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind," et.al.)

<sup>9</sup> The "*de*" here is a mild conjunction, translated "and", "then", "now", but seldom "but." Thus it appears that Jesus is not contradicting ("but") but is explaining ("now") ("a marker of added relation" – Louw-Nida Lexicon).

*The righteousness of God, revealed as the totality of the Law in 5:17-18, that is kept only by Jesus (5:17-19), is seen in the love of God displayed toward man; sacrificing for the sake of the brother. Thus in this section, Jesus will relate how the character (love) of God is to be played out toward others. It is this perfect love that is the requirement of the Law. (Note it will be contrasted by the Scribes and Pharisees in 6:1-18 as a reflection of 5:19-20).*

*Jesus will discuss the Old Testament as interpreted narrowly by the Pharisees. It was not that they were not quoting precisely the Old Testament, only that they had not contextually interpreted it to reflect God's desires. They had taken it out of its context and left it externally only, but Jesus points out that God's desires for His image were that they represent Him from the heart. The representative had value as he represented the desires of the Suzerain (Refer to Appendix I for the background of the Old Testament Covenant structure with regard to Israel).*

Deu. 6:5 "And you shall love the LORD your God **with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**

6 "And these words, which I am commanding you today, **shall be on your heart;**

*Thus Jesus instructs them in the chapter not to have externals only, but to have a heart felt love obedience.*

<u>Reference</u>	<u>External</u> "You have heard..."	<u>Internal (heart)</u> "but I say unto you..."
5:21-26	Do not murder	Do not hate
5:27-33	Do not commit adultery <sup>10</sup>	Do not lust
5:33-37	Do not make false vows	Do not tempt God, not arrogant, submissive
5:38-42	Take vengeance	Suffer for righteousness
5:43-47	Hate enemies	Love of enemies

*This passage beginning in 5:21 bears a great similarity to Leviticus 19:15-18 where the treatment of brother is dealt with significantly. This section significantly ends with the quotation from:*

Leviticus 19:2.

NASB: "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy."

LXX: ἅγιοι ἔσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν

קְדָשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Matthew 5:48

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<sup>10</sup> The verse in 5:31 beginning with "and it was said" appears to be a subset of 5:27 since it leaves out the "You have heard" which is present in all the others. Thus the topic is still the perception of keeping the Law by external self-righteousness, but not keeping it from the heart. Thus the sending away of a wife is unfaithfulness

NASB: "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν.

*The point of this passage is that of comparing the necessity of the representative of God (man) having the same heart as God. This is the point of Leviticus 19 as well. Note the similarities of the following matching passages as Leviticus refers to "slandering" (compare with calling one's brother "Raca" or "fool" (Matt.) and "act against the life of your neighbor" (compare with "murder").*

**Leviticus 19:16-17:** <sup>16</sup> 'You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD. <sup>17</sup> 'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.

**Matthew 5:21-22:** <sup>21</sup> "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' <sup>22</sup> "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough* to go into the fiery hell.

*Later in Matthew 5, Jesus moves again to the Leviticus passage. Note that Jesus talks about judging properly (Lev. 19:15), but in the Matthew passage, not only denies the execution of judgment on him, but instructs the initiation of mercy toward the enemy. This is an indication of a change in the theocracy from Leviticus. The judgment is still to be fair, but the judgment is delayed.*

**Matthew 5:38-45:**

<sup>38</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' <sup>39</sup> "But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. <sup>40</sup> "And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. <sup>41</sup> "And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

*In the next section Jesus deals with the Leviticus passage, denying that the passage instructed one to hate (particularly the Gentile rulership who as perceived as enemies of God and Israel). The passage in Leviticus denies one personal vengeance and personal judgment for personal affronts. Personal judgment for civil judgments was denied. This did not prevent justice according to the Law which was God's judgment. However, since the Law was now not in effect since the Gentiles were ruling, that judgment was delayed for God's mercy to be extended. Thus, one should bless the oppressing and godless Gentiles.*

<sup>43</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' <sup>44</sup> "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you <sup>45</sup> in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

**Leviticus 19:15-18:**

<sup>15</sup> 'You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. <sup>16</sup> 'You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD. <sup>17</sup> 'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in

your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. <sup>18</sup> You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

*The point of the whole of the Sermon and particularly 5:21-48 is that the representative must have the character of God. Jesus has it (5:17) and it must be exactly the same to enter the kingdom, where God's character is fully represented (5:19b). They are to be "sons of your Father" (5:45; representatives), totally holy (5:48).*

**1. The representative's heart is to be reconciled toward brothers as God's heart desires reconciliation to man (5:21-26).**

*Not murdering was at the basis of the O.T. Law. It was the prevention of the removal of a representative of God based on self-centered motives. Each man was separately an image (representative) of God. Capital punishment was based on the fact that one had removed (murdered) the image of God for an unjust cause (self-centered).<sup>11</sup> Primarily, the Old Testament counseled reconciliation and respect for one's brother from the heart. Since the love of God for men had been shown, man was to represent that love by pursuing reconciliation with his brother (cf. Matt. 18:12-22). The link between the first part of the story and the second is the first has no regard for the value of his brother before God ("fool") and the second does not pursue the reconciliation with his fellow image. In both cases the offender does not value the brother as God does. Thus, in the second Jesus points out the uselessness of feigning a relationship with God when he does not perceive God's valuation of his brother.*

**a. The representatives heart was to be toward a brother as God's heart toward men (5:21-22).**

5:21 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'

22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell.

*Here clearly Jesus links the internal heart (anger) to the external (murder). In essence the "Raca" is an equivalent to being "empty headed", a term of great derision, in essence, 'worthless'. Thus, from the observer's perspective he does not value the brother's life as God values it.*

*"the court": This term is what is used for the Law or for God's value system, i.e., His character.*

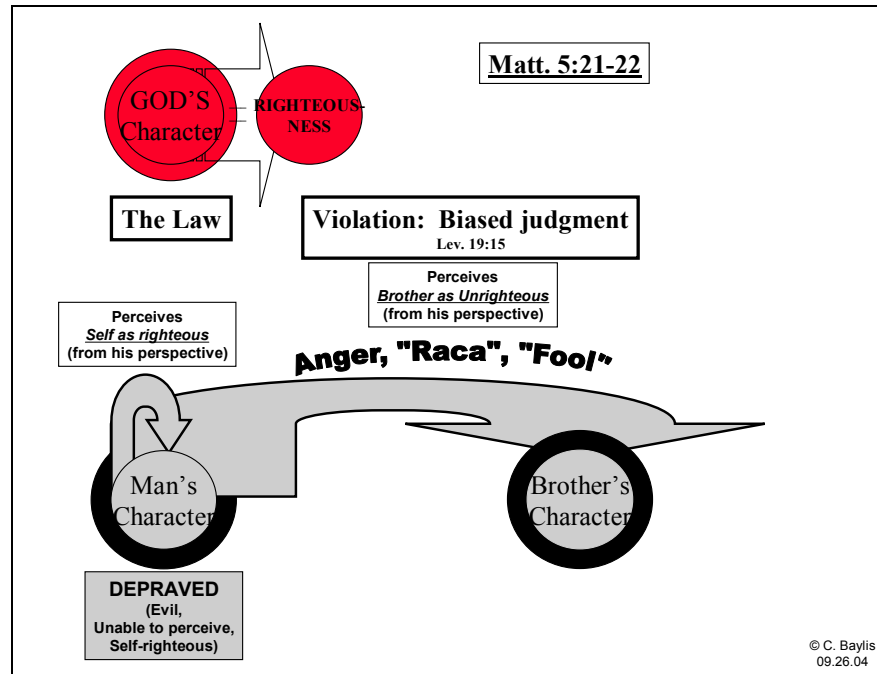
*Jesus' point thus is that if someone judges his brother from personal bias or "slanders" his brother, both without a cause from the Law (God's perspective) is thus guilty of judging one from a self-righteous or perspective of personal bias, thus guilty*

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to Genesis 9:6.

*of false judgment themselves and thus shows themselves to be short of the value of God and not the brother that they have inadequately judged.*

**Leviticus 19:15** 'You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly.



Lev. 19:17 'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.

*To perceive that a brother has no value is to misperceive God's love. If one does not understand God's love toward men, then he has not perceived God in His ultimate role as offering forgiveness to man. Ultimately this person's actions betray his heart and he is judged.*

*Anger demonstrates self-righteousness. That is, the brother who is angry is demonstrating his feeling that his brother is less than he is. This is not the case since both are in great debt to God.*

- b. **The application of the heart toward the brother is to recognize that there can be no reconciliation with God if one does not reconcile with his brother (seek his brother's forgiveness) (5:23-26).**

*In essence the offering is a reconciliation or relationship offering that the man is making to God. Yet he has not perceived his own depravity in relationship to his brother, how can he understand his depravity in relationship to God? Thus this lack*



*of perception betrays his perception of God which results in judgment.*

- 23 "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar,<sup>12</sup> and there remember that your brother has something against you,<sup>13</sup>
- 24 leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.
- 25 "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way,<sup>14</sup> in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.
- 26 Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent.<sup>15</sup>

*The story is broken into two parts. The first examines the heart of the brother toward another. If his heart is angry then he is guilty of murder. Since the self-centered attitude is in the heart and murder is the external representation of this. Based on Deut. 6:5 when all was to be done from the heart, anger is the heart attitude towards the external act and demonstrates that this is not a heart of patience.<sup>16</sup>*

*The second part (going before the altar) is similar to the story regarding the Master and the debt which could not be paid in Matt. 18:22-35. The brother has not paid the listener, owes him some debt. However, the listener has not acted as the Judge requires (the Law) toward the brother. Thus he should seek*

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<sup>12</sup> The point is here that the man is seeking relationship with the Father having not understood the relationship that the Father has expressed to him. In Matthew perception of God is demonstrated by relationship to others.

<sup>13</sup> Note here that the reader is the one who has offended. The brother has sought reconciliation and this one has rejected it. This is comparable to the small debtor in Matthew 18. The larger debtor has not acted in a way that God (the King) had acted toward him, thus there is an inconsistency in the representation of mercy. The point is then that the one who has offended is the one who is inconsistent with the way God has acted toward him and the way he has acted toward his brother. He needs to reconcile (act toward the brother the same way God has acted toward him) or he will end up paying off his debt toward God on his own (unpayable). The following point from Proverbs establishes this. One must act as the Judge determines is fair toward his brother. If he does not then the brother will deliver him to the Judge who will act on behalf of the brother (since they are in agreement) and the reader will end up paying at the judgment.

<sup>14</sup> Proverbs 6:2-3 refers to this situation. "6:1 My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, Have given a pledge for a stranger, 2 If you have been snared with the words of your mouth, Have been caught with the words of your mouth, 3 Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, Go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor. 4 Do not give sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids; 5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hunter's hand, And like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

<sup>15</sup> This is very similar to the story in Matt. 18. The brother here is very cognizant of the fact that the reader has not sought forgiveness. Since he has not sought forgiveness of the brother, he has not perceived that he needs to seek forgiveness of God. Thus, ultimately at the judgment this becomes effective in the judgment into hell.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to James 1:19-20 for a similar discussion by James. It is not that God does not have the attribute of anger (cf. 18:35) but that He is patient before He brings the judgment.

*reconciliation (i.e., perform as the Judge decrees, i.e.) or he himself will find himself in prison, paying off his own debt as he has decreed toward the brother. In other words the listener needs to act as the judge would have him act toward the brother, or he will end up in prison.*

*The offering was something one did toward God (for God?), but he is told not to sacrifice (offer), for it is the representation of God's heart (*hesed*) that God desires. Jesus states this also in Matt. 12:7 in condemning the Pharisees. They thought that the emphasis was on their doing something for God, but Jesus corrects them by pointing out that compassion is the heart of God and this is what He desires. Then He quotes Hosea 6:6 to indicate this.*

**Hosea 6:6** For I delight in loyalty (לֶחֶם) rather than sacrifice,  
And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

*When both are put together it is clear that anger (not forgiveness, nor confession, nor reconciliation) is not a characteristic of the Judge (God during this time). Thus the listener needs to act as God has acted toward him (based on understanding) or he himself will end up not reconciled to God since he has not perceived it.*

**2. The representative's heart needs to imitate God's heart in relationship to marriage, not anger but extending love, patience as God has (5:27-32).**

*The relationship of the foregoing passage with this passage must not be neglected. God has pointed out that anger is not to be part of the representative's heart nor actions since God is patient and reconciling. The second part where the listener treats the brother unlike the way God has treated him ends up in his own judgment as he has misperceived the heart of the Judge in his actions and has become self-condemned by misunderstanding the Judge (God).*

*This point could not be clearer that one's character is noted in their treatment of others, especially those who owe them (i.e., have come short of their expectations, or obligations). Thus, when one is confronted by an adverse personality, particularly unjustly, their character can be noted by their response.*

*The conclusion then is that to judge a brother as undeserving of his wife, yet the listener is deserving (lust, coveting) is unlike God since God has graciously given to each man. The listener then moves against the brother (sister in this case) to divorce her (though God did not divorce him, but loved him unconditionally). The point is that if one treats a sister unlike God has treated them, then they do not perceive God's love and justice.*

*Positionally, those who do not understand this (God's mercy to them) are unsaved and will be judged eternally. Sanctificationally, the point is that the believer has not understood his place as representative and his heart*

*needs to be changed to represent God.<sup>17</sup> Yet while the deed is a deed of death, it has been taken under the blood (paid).*

**a. The representative's heart must represent God's heart the relationship of man to women expressed fully in marriage (5:27-30).**

- 27 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';
- 28 but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust (Lit.: covet) for her<sup>18</sup> has committed adultery with her already in his heart.
- 29 "And if your right eye<sup>19</sup> makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.
- 30 "And if your right hand<sup>20</sup> makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.<sup>21</sup>

*Jesus is essentially quoting the last commandment of the Law, "Thou shalt not covet." This last commandment summed up all the others as it indicated a selfish basis for any action, one's own desires to take care of oneself at the cost of others. Jesus' direct reference was Deut. 5:21 and Exodus 20:17*

"you shall not covet your neighbor's wife"

*This indicated blatantly that the act did not have to be committed, but the very conception of self-desire in one's heart was enough to qualify as sin.*

*Here is the basis for the man/woman relationship in creation as God intended it.<sup>22</sup> It requires faithfulness from the heart, not*

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<sup>17</sup> While the penalty for not representing God is not hell as for the unbeliever, since Christ has taken these deeds (sins) and put them under His blood. The penalty is taken for him by Christ (every last cent is paid).

<sup>18</sup> The image is desiring what has not been given him by God. The point is here that one should not covet a brother's wife, since that was to offend him (cf. 1 Thess. 4).

<sup>19</sup> The eye refers back to the man *looking* on her with lust.

<sup>20</sup> Many have proposed that the offender here is using his hand to take what is not his with regard to the woman. The 'right hand' throughout Matthew is used as the person's primary hand which he uses to accomplish his desires, and frequently it was the place where the highest representative sat (cf. 22:44, cf. also 20:21, 25:33.)

<sup>21</sup> Obviously this is hyperbole to stress a point of importance. Yet it must be noted that its literal truth is still valid. Would it not be better to have lost a physical extremity than to lose one's life in hell? Note that plucking one's eye out would not change his heart. So what is proposed is not a practical solution, but clearly hyperbole. However, the desire of the person is clear. He is willing to do anything. Yet the solution proposed is clearly inadequate, since the person casts out an eye when the heart is the problem. The problem clearly is not external but internal. The heart is driving the eyes and hands. The heart must be thrown out. And Jesus will do that for man.

<sup>22</sup> In Matt. 19:1, Jesus includes the creative argument of Genesis 2 in with His discussion on marriage and divorce.

*simply external. Note here that the woman is part of God's desire for creation. Yet the observer has violated God's intent in creation. He has not shared the heart of God. The externals of the Pharisees will be examined further in chapter 6. They do externals to be seen by man. The internals are seen by God*

*Jesus drives the point home that the greatest desire of man's heart must be to know God and to please Him. Any extreme must be pursued (down to the heart) to represent His God. The point is clear; the heart must be changed to monitor the eye and hand. The illustration of removing the eye must be applied to the heart. And only Jesus will change the heart. The reader has an evil heart and it must be changed.*

*The significant point here is that one covets what God has not given to him, e.g. a woman. Thus he does not reflect God's desires. In fact, he offends his brother who has married this woman, as he has judged himself more worthy than his brother of this woman. He has defrauded his brother.<sup>23</sup>*

*If one's eye or hand (acting from the heart) offends them in this way (coveting a woman) they need to get rid of it totally, that is, get rid of their heart, for it is offending God and will come into judgment, not representing God's desires. Later it will be seen that the only way to change one's heart is through Christ and His imputation of righteousness to man.*

**b. The representative's heart must be faithful to marriage in creation with regard to women in order to love the brother as God does.**

31 "And it was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY<sup>24</sup>, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE';  
32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8.

<sup>24</sup> Refer to 1 Corinthians 7, ". . . not I but the Lord" does not allow divorce. Paul allows a departure by the unbelieving spouse (no desire to reconcile, not being under Scripture and God's Law) but remaining spouse must want reconciliation. Should there be divorce and remarriage there cannot be reconciliation.

<sup>25</sup> The O.T. reference that Jesus is seemingly referencing is Deut. 24:1 where it is stated:

24:1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house, 2 and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's *wife*, 3 and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts *it* in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, 4 *then* her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

Several things here should be noted about this passage:

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- It is not stated in a positive way, i.e., it is acceptable. The literal is "If a man . . . ." Thus the restriction in the verse is not regarding the divorce, but regarding the remarriage to the former husband. In other words it is not opening up a right to divorce, but only commenting on the situation of divorce that existed. Refer to Deut. 22:28 regarding a premarital sexual relationship between two unmarried people, "If a man finds girl ((נַעֲרָה) אִישׁ כִּי־יִמְצָא אִישׁ (נַעֲרָה) who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her . . . ." The introductory "If a man . . . ." is the same as Deut. 24:1 (כִּי־יִקַּח אִישׁ אִשָּׁה). Without a doubt, 22:28 is not saying that it is acceptable.
  - Note that she finds no "favor" or "grace" in his eyes. This word is not to be negated. While not always related to the seeking of grace from God, the word is always related to begging or requesting an act from a grantor (one who has the ability to grant) to a grantee (one who does not have the ability to get but only to receive based on their request). Thus, the first husband here is restricting what she requests, that is to stay with him.
  - The cause of his action of divorce is not mentioned. It is literally, "nakedness" or less literally, "shame". Thus he has made a judgment that she is not deserving of him (whether justifiable or not).
  - The story continues (not justifying any of this) and simply states that she remarries.
  - The restriction is on her attempt to remarry the original husband should the same thing happen again. The restriction is total since it even includes the possibility that he might die (normally death would end the vow and the person would have the right to remarry). Thus, this restriction is much more intense than a restriction of divorce and remarriage, but a restriction on remarrying the former husband after another marriage has taken place.
  - Note that the reason she cannot remarry the original husband is that she has been defiled (become unclean, normally in a ritual way), and as can be seen with respect to YHWH is the intent here. It appears that it was not the 'divorce' that made her unclean but the remarriage (since it appears she could have returned prior to the remarriage). Thus it does not appear to be a relationship to men that is of concern here but to God.
  - "find favor" is used in Genesis 6:8, 19:19 to indicate that one sought (and could have received) some beneficial gift. It thus appears that the first husband could have prevented all of this by acting with favor over whatever offense he had against her. Thus, it appears that Jesus is stating that his lack of offering favor (as God does) was a contributing issue to her remarriage, thus he incurs guilt with her.
  - This passage in Deuteronomy is one of the last dealing with marriage and divorce. It cannot be taken in isolation from the other passages which begin for the most part in Deuteronomy 22 where the marriage and divorce proposals are placed out (not in Deut. 24 where the issue is not divorce and remarriage, but remarriage to the original spouse) and does not deal with the issue of divorce nor remarriage.
    - The case of unfaithfulness during the engagement period
      - The finding by the husband on the wedding night of her unfaithfulness

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13 "If any man takes a wife and goes in to her and *then* turns against her, 14 and charges her with shameful deeds and publicly defames her, and says, 'I took this woman, *but* when I came near her, I did not find her a virgin,'

- The case:

- 1 The man is lying to escape the marriage (engagement) contract
- 2 The girl is not a virgin and was unfaithful and thus deserving of death.

15 then the girl's father and her mother shall take and bring out the *evidence* of the girl's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. 16 "And the girl's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man for a wife, but he turned against her; 17 and behold, he has charged her with shameful deeds, saying, "I did not find your daughter a virgin." But this is the *evidence* of my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city.

- Results

- 1 The man is found to be lying and is beaten and fined. The contract is established (the only exception being her unfaithfulness) and thus the life of the contract is not able to be voided.

18 "So the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him, 19 and they shall fine him a hundred *shekels* of silver and give it to the girl's father, because he publicly defamed a virgin of Israel. And she shall remain his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days.

- 2 The girl is found to be guilty of unfaithfulness and is executed.

20 "But if this charge is true, that the girl was not found a virgin, 21 then they shall bring out the girl to the doorway of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death because she has committed an act of folly in Israel, by playing the harlot in her father's house; thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

Conclusions: The only way out of the marriage contract was 'fornication' during the engagement period. Should this occur then the woman would die.

- Other premarital violations

- 1 Sexual relations with a married woman results in death of both parties
- 2 Sexual relations with an engaged virgin (by another man) results in death for both parties (note she is considered his neighbor's wife, though engaged). (Exception: Rape)
- 3 Sexual relations with a non-engaged virgin results in lifetime contract of marriage being enforced (no divorce).

Conclusion:

The normal engagement/marriage process was listed in 22:13-21. The only way out of the contract (alive) was if she was found guilty of premarital sexual relations. After the marriage the only way out was if she fornicated within that bond. In both cases she is executed and the husband is free of the contract due to her death.

In all other cases of premarital relationships the marriage does not continue since one or both persons is executed unless they are both unengaged. Thus the only one that results in marriage states, "he cannot divorce her all his days."

*The point of divorce is a treatment of one's sister (brother) for one's own interest (not God's). Thus, the heart desires what is not his in 5:28, and then it results in a lack of love of brother (sister). In a contest of reconciliation and love of the other at all costs, divorce is the contrast.*

*Divorce is not simply breaking a relationship between a man and a woman, but is a relationship between them (together and individually) to God through a vow. (In Matthew 19:6 note that God has joined them together as one).<sup>26</sup>*

*The restriction of marrying a divorced woman is to ignore her vow before God and he is not honoring her vow with her husband. Thus, sending his wife away was negating God's clearly expressed desires of the relationship between brothers and sisters in marriage.*

*Note that the overall context for this passage is the relationship of the reflection of God's love is to be reflected in His representatives (to the extreme). It is a seeking of the ultimate desire of God. The section is not counseling on what would be*

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In other words the only times that any events result in a final marriage contract are when the woman is a virgin when she consummated the sexual relationship with her husband (or husband to be). And in both those cases it is stated that he cannot divorce her all his days. In other words once the marriage was consummated and the evidence of virginity during engagement was made, then there is no allowance for divorce (only death).

22 "If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel. 23 "If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and *another* man finds her in the city and lies with her, 24 then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's wife. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. 25 "But if in the field the man finds the girl who is engaged, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lies with her shall die. 26 "But you shall do nothing to the girl; there is no sin in the girl worthy of death, for just as a man rises against his neighbor and murders him, so is this case. 27 "When he found her in the field, the engaged girl cried out, but there was no one to save her. 28 "If a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered, 29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall become his wife because he has violated her; he cannot divorce her all his days. 30 "A man shall not take his father's wife so that he shall not uncover his father's skirt.

<sup>26</sup> Also note 1 Peter 3. The woman is submissive to her husband even though he is disobedient to the word. She is vertically obligated to God, not based on her husband's behavior.

*best between several less than perfect options.<sup>27</sup> The exception clause cannot express what is simply acceptable in a less than perfect world.<sup>28</sup> The total expression must express God's desires as reflected in his representative.*

*The context here is that of placing God's desires first and only, which are the spiritual benefit of the marital partner (based on hesed).<sup>29</sup> Divorce is the opposite of reconciliation, of caring for the brother (sister). Marrying a woman not his is the fulfillment of the "lusting" of v. 28.*

*In relationship to Deut. 24:1ff. it appears that Jesus has condemned both men, the man who sent her away and the man who married (remarried) her.*

### **3. The representative of God must not elevate himself above his God designed representative status (5:33-37).**

*The taking of a vow is very connected to the marriage in the foregoing context. Vows were never commanded but were optional in the Old Testament. Usually vows were made to obtain a benefit from God by pledging something. Thus the representative is trying to force God's hand by vowing.<sup>30</sup> (Vows that are part of the revelation of God are not condemned here, i.e., marriage).*

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<sup>27</sup> It is necessary to contextualize this difficulty (of the exception clause). Based on the hermeneutic in the beginning of the notes there were several levels of contextualization accepted. The first was the use within the immediate context. The second is its use within Matthew. The third is any use of Old Testament passages which Jesus is directly referring. In addition, it must be noted that none of the parallel gospels include the exception clause when quoting Jesus in this similar statement. When one comes to a conclusion, they must be able to explain the inclusion (in Matthew) and the absence (in the other gospels) as related to each of their contextual messages.

<sup>28</sup> In Jesus parallel argument in 19:1ff. He points out that Moses had regulated divorce based on the hardness of their hearts (Deut. 24:1). Thus what Jesus says regarding divorce is a strong contrast to what is (or even may be done) in a less than perfect world. The only mention of anyone getting a righteous divorce in Matthew is Joseph (1:19). In today's terms that was the engagement period and not the formal marriage. Matthew must put the exception clause in Matt. 5 and 19 or else Joseph's righteous divorce from Mary (O.T. considered the engaged woman a wife, even though not married) would be unrighteous. In the context then of marriage which includes the engagement (Deut. 22 considered it thus), Jesus does mention the exception of violations in engagement.

The question of Joseph's attempt to divorce her privately might be an objection to this view. Since the violation that Joseph assumed was Mary's would have resulted in death under Jewish Law (Jew's did not have the right of execution under Roman Law) and Joseph seeks a divorce (instead of death) then wouldn't the proper substitution for adultery in the marriage (which required death) also be divorce? The answer is that what Joseph was doing was breaking off the marriage. Since a marriage was to be entered into by two pure persons, and Mary appeared not to be that, Joseph was thus making sure that his marriage was righteous one by breaking the contract. If adultery shows up in a marriage, it does not improve one's own marriage if a divorce occurs.

<sup>29</sup> The absoluteness of this relationship is expressed in 5:21ff. where the brother must value his relationship to his brother to the extreme.

<sup>30</sup> Although some vows would not be trying to force God's hand but complying with what God had instructed in order to obtain a benefit. Thus the marriage vow would not be forcing God's hand, but was a required promise so that the man could obtain the benefit of a wife and the things that went with that union.



*However, the emphasis here seems to be on authorizing one's own actions based on an oath in something of value. So as one would swear by money (guarantee that what he said would happen) so also this one is indicating his own ability to bring forth events, when in fact they are to be submissive to God and to His will.*

*In other words, the representative must be submissive to God's will. As James says in 4:13-16,*

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, *you ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that." 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

33 "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.'

34 "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

36 "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

37 "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; and anything beyond these is of evil.

*The references to the oath indicate that the representative is calling on something beyond him (or his control) to validate either a promise or statement, or to move God to act (as vows in the Old Testament were frequently utilized).*

*In other words, the representative is calling on something beyond him. It places him in a more dominant position than that which he has been allotted by God.<sup>31</sup>*

*If he vows in order to get God to act, then he has not accepted the sovereign plan in which God has placed him. If he vows in order to validate statements or promises, then he is presuming on something or someone over which he has no right to call to validate himself.*

*In other words he is to know that he is the representative, and as such is not to move other than in total submission, not presuming on God, or on himself beyond his ability.<sup>32</sup>*

*The oaths in Matthew are Herod in 14:7, 9, where he keeps his to execute John the Baptist, although he is reluctant to do so, yet he does keep it (a foolish oath). Peter denies that he knows the Lord in 26:72, again a foolish oath taken to insure one's assertions, and of course, this*

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<sup>31</sup> Jesus attacks the Pharisees for their vows in 23:16ff.

<sup>32</sup> Note that Herod makes an oath in 14:7.

*one is also made foolishly. The truth would have been the appropriate way to go here.*

*In 23:16-22 there is a lengthy discourse on oaths, which would be the direct relationship to this verse. The message of that passage is that these Pharisees were swearing by what they thought was valuable, that is, gold, offerings, etc. However, the text points out that in essence they are swearing based on God Himself. Thus their oaths were before God, not before man, and some value that was obtainable. The message thus, is not to swear, since the value of oaths was far beyond their ability to keep it.*

**4. The representative of God must endure persecution imitating the patience of God toward the seed of the Satan<sup>33</sup> (5:38-42)**

- 38 "You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.'<sup>34</sup>
- 39 "But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also<sup>35</sup>.
- 40 "And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.
- 41 "And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two.
- 42 "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

*The context here is that of a persecutor. Note the use of "him who is evil" (lit. "he who is the evil one")<sup>36</sup> as an opposer of Godly behavior.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the representative of God is being persecuted (offenses). His response must be that of patient endurance. Each of the first three examples (39,40,41) are clearly opposers. The fourth may also be seen as an opposer since it is sandwiched between 41 and 43 which begins the section on enemies of God. Note also that the fourth is not extended to give more than requested but is simply to give what is requested.*

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<sup>33</sup> There is an emphasis on those who oppose the representative of God per Genesis 3:15 "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed." It is immediately seen in Cain and Abel. In addition it is not only an individual seed but a national seed. Thus, the persecution here is of a national nature. Note that one is being forced to go a mile, as the government could force one to go with him at his command (cf. 27:32 where Simon the Cyrenian was pressed into service.) This is the emphasis clearly present here of the Times of the Gentiles of Daniel. Persecution of Israel will continue until the end of these times.

<sup>34</sup> This quotation is from Leviticus 24:20 and Deut. 19:1. In Leviticus it describes the penalties of those who had violated the crimes of murder of human beings or executions of animals. The penalty phase was to return what had been killed. In the case of human beings it was the life of the one who had murdered. In the case of animals it was to replace the animal. In the case of humans his own life would be given, or if there was an injury, the same injury would be inflicted on him. In the case of Deuteronomy the context is talking about a false witness who had desired to have a punishment inflicted on an enemy through his testimony. He receives what the enemy was to receive.

<sup>35</sup> If this is to be taken as the enemies of God then it must be dispensationally understood. For while God loves His enemies (the theme), He will not always be patient, and will ultimately judge them. Thus while these Gentiles rule, God is patient for them to have opportunity to come to Him apart from the imminent threat of judgment.

<sup>36</sup> Note the use of "the evil one" in 5:37.

<sup>37</sup> Note that Jesus calls his readers "evil" in 7:11.

*This, of course, is a parallel to God who gives what is asked of Him (that the asker needs).<sup>38</sup>*

*The nature of these offenses is the reversal of nations due to Israel's sin. The Times of the Gentiles are upon them and Israel is under unjust persecution. Thus the crimes here infer a Gentile dominion. The quotation is that of a civil infraction within Israel as a theocracy. Jesus is saying that that enforcement under Gentile dominion is not appropriate (not having dominion) and now must submit to the oppression of the Gentiles. In 2 Samuel 16:9-14, David is under judgment and Absalom is in Jerusalem ruling. David rejects vengeance on his opposers taking his chastisement as God desires. Thus applying a civil law for Israel under their dominion is no longer effective in a Gentile godless society. Israel is to accept its judgment.*

*In the context of God's love here, then the message is that one is to love his enemies. In the Old Testament, these enemies were to be executed. However, the Times of the Gentiles are upon them and judgment has been taken from them. Thus they are to act in a loving response to their authority.*

**5. The representative of God must express love for those who oppose him as mediating God's word, since God also expresses hesed toward His enemies (5:38-42).**

- 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, and hate your enemy.'
- 44 "But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you
- 45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.
- 46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same?
- 47 "And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

*The point is here that God's enemies are the representative's enemies as well. Thus one needs to reflect God's patience during the time of delay, since he is to represent God. The day will come when the delay is over and God will express judgment on them. But for now it is the day of love and patience.*

*Even in the Old Testament one was to show compassion for one's enemy at the personal level. Vengeance was only allowed through the proper authority (Exodus 21:22, Numbers 35:9-34). David was prevented from exercising judgment on Nabal (1 Samuel 25) since he was not installed as the authoritative king as yet. It was God who delivered the vengeance. Solomon was authorized as king to execute judgment (1 Kings 1--2). However, Jesus has appeared with the*

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<sup>38</sup> This seems to be a reference to reconciliation of the persecutor. If it is a parallel to God, then the believer is obligated to give what he has, which is the righteousness of God, or in the case of a poor brother the aid that he needs. It would only be an exhortation regarding anything if the person was a persecutor which seems to be the case, (cf. 5:45).

*revelation of God's mercy, and now there is a delay until God executes the judgment. That judgment will be executed on the seeds of the serpent.*<sup>39</sup>

*Note also that the Old Testament promoted love for one's enemy in Exodus 23:4-5.*

4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him.

5 "If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying *helpless* under its load, you shall refrain from leaving it to him, you shall surely release it with him.

*Note the phrase "sons of the Father" (5:45). It indicates again the theme of representation by the 'image'.*

## 6. **Conclusion: Man must be complete as His Sovereign is complete.**

5:48 "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"<sup>40</sup>."

*This is a quotation of Leviticus 19:2<sup>41</sup> (and others in Leviticus). The representative is to be just like His Sovereign in actions. He must give without expecting return. He must love the brother as God has loved him. He must humble himself for the sake of the brother. There is nothing less.*

*There is especially an emphasis on the period of time brought about by the Messiah, the time of delay. It would involve persecution on the believer. However, during this delay, God's desire (and thus his representatives) is reconciliation both to God and man.*

*Thus a brother is to value a brother as God does. He is to reconcile when he offends a brother as he is reconciled to God. He should never divorce (opposite of reconciliation). He should not take oaths (places himself above his position). He should be patient when persecuted. He should seek to love his enemies (persecutors) so that they might be reconciled to God.*

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<sup>39</sup> Refer to Psalm 149.

<sup>40</sup> The noun form of τελιος is used only here and in 19:21. In 19:21 Jesus says to the rich man, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell all your possessions and give to the poor . . .". The point is that the rich man, who felt he had reflected perfectly the love of God (had the heart of God) in Deuteronomy is now told to act like God, to give Himself for the hopeless. The man cannot do this.

<sup>41</sup> Although it should be noted that the LXX uses αγιοζ in Leviticus 19 (as in 1 Peter 1:15) in place of τελιος in Matthew 5.